

*Thamnistes anabatinus coronatus*, *Dysithamnus mentalis suffusus*, *Herpsilochmus rufimarginatus exiguus*, *Grallaricula flavirostris brevis*, *Margarornis bellulus*, *Mitrephanes eminulus*, *Caryothraustes canadensis simulans*, *Tanagra fucosus*, *Chrysothlypis chrysomelas ocellaris*, *Vireolanius eximius mutabilis*, *Basileuterus melanogenys ignotus*, *B. m. eximius*, *Troglodytes festinus*, *Myadestes coloratus*, *Catharus fuscescens mirabilis*. There are also three new species for which Mr. Nelson establishes new genera: *Goethalsia bella* on interesting hummingbird allied to *Goldmania*, and named in honor of Col. Goethals, head of the Panama Canal Commission; *Prædo audax*, a flycatcher allied to *Aphanotriccus* but resembling *Epidonax* in color; and *Hylospingus inornatus* a tanager resembling *Chlorospingus*. Incidentally Mr. Nelson also describes *Tanagra xanthogastra quitensis* from Quito, Ecuador, and *Hemithraupis ornatus* from Truando, Colombia. The Genus *Tanagra* is used by Mr. Nelson for the genus formerly called *Euphonia* while *Tangara* is used in place of *Calospiza* (= *Calliste*). This seems inevitable if we regard these names as different and take them from the first place of publication but in the absence of any word of explanation it is misleading to those not familiar with the history of the case.—W. S.

**Oberholser's Revision of the Green Herons.**<sup>1</sup>—As the result of a critical study of 568 specimens of Green Herons, *Butorides virescens*, Mr. Oberholser recognizes eighteen geographic races, twelve of which are here named as new. These are *B. v. ereconomus*, north central Mexico; *B. v. mesatus*, western Nicaragua; *B. v. hypernotius*, Costa Rica to Brazil; *B. v. margaritophilus*, San Miguel Island, Bay of Panama; *B. v. cubanus*, Greater and northern Lesser Antilles; *B. v. christophorensis*, St. Christopher; *B. v. dominicanus*, Dominica; *B. v. lucianus*, St. Lucia; *B. v. barbadosensis*, Barbados; *B. v. grenadensis*, Grenada; *B. v. tobagensis*, Tobago; and *B. v. curaçensis*, Curaçao.

Mr. Oberholser has presented extremely detailed descriptions and a large array of measurements and his paper represents a painstaking piece of work. Whether ornithologists will endorse his views remains to be seen. With practically the same material before them Messrs. Thayer and Bangs have already (Bull. Mus. Comp. Zool., 46, p. 142) expressed precisely opposite views on the status of the San Miguel Island birds and have questioned the distinctness of several of the forms named up to that time. As San Miguel Island is but twenty miles off shore, it would indeed seem remarkable that a bird of the size and habits of a heron should there become differentiated into a local race, and in considering any group of large water birds it would seem that much more latitude should be given to individual varia-

<sup>1</sup> A Revision of the Subspecies of the Green Heron (*Butorides virescens* [Linn.]). By Harry C. Oberholser. Proc. U. S. Nat. Museum, Vol. 42, pp. 529-577. August 29, 1912.

tion, and the greater possibility of passage from one island to another be admitted, than in the case of small resident passerine species.— W. S.

**Oberholser's One Hundred and Four new Birds from the Barusan Islands and Sumatra.**<sup>1</sup>— To those who are familiar with Mr. Oberholser's painstaking monographic work and detailed descriptions the present contribution must come as a distinct shock. The presentation of 104 new forms on 21 octavo pages naturally permits of but very brief diagnoses, but so short are some of these here given, that for all practical purposes they might as well have been omitted entirely, leaving simply a type locality. For example *Meiglyptes grammithorax micropterus* is described as "Resembling *Meiglyptes grammithorax grammithorax*, but smaller.", followed by the citation of a type specimen in the U. S. National Museum, from Nias Island. We know from this that a name has been given to a form of *M. grammithorax* from Nias, but beyond that, without measurements or further diagnosis, the publication is absolutely worthless. With a specimen of this group in hand from a neighboring island one could not possibly identify it without examining Mr. Oberholser's type. In the entire 104 diagnoses, measurements are given in only twelve instances while the descriptions average two and a half lines, including a trinomial name mentioned for comparison!

In such contributions the advancement of science seems to have been completely lost sight of, and the only explanation would seem to be the desire to secure the species to an author or the types to an institution. The promise of later detailed publications does not constitute an excuse for the issue of such useless diagnoses.

If publication of species in advance of faunal papers is absolutely necessary, the journal should devote the space, and the author the time, necessary to make the diagnoses adequate. Our rules of nomenclature are binding us more and more to the original descriptions in all systematic work and it behooves us to make these adequate.

This criticism is not directed at Mr. Oberholser but at a practice that is all too common and which we are sorry to see endorsed by him and by the Smithsonian Institution.

In foot-notes several nomenclatural matters are briefly discussed. *Dendrophassa* Gloger 1842 is substituted for *Osmotreron* Bonap. on ground of priority, while *Treron nipalensis* (Hodgson) is changed to *T. curvirostra* (Gmelin) for the same reason. *Psittinus cyanurus* (Forster) is shown to be the proper name for the bird commonly called *P. incertus* (Shaw.), while *Mixornis gularis* (Raffles) becomes *M. pileata* (Blyth), and *Lalage terat* Auct. becomes *L. nigra* (Forster). So also *Cinnyris pectoralis* (Horsf.) becomes *C. ornata* Less. and *Chalcoparia phænicotis* Auct. becomes *C. singalensis* (Gm.).— W. S.

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<sup>1</sup> Descriptions of One Hundred and Four New Species and Subspecies of Birds from the Barusan Islands and Sumatra. Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections. Vol. 60, No. 7, pp. 1-21. October 26, 1912.